PROCEEDINGS OF THE BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

ALLOSEBASTES, NEW SUBGENUS FOR SEBASTODES SINENSIS, SCORPAENID FISH OF THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA¹

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The species of Sebastodes that Gilbert (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., vol. 13, 1890, pp. 81-82) described from the Gulf of California as Sebastichthys sinensis is so distinct as to warrant its separation as the type and sole member of a new subgenus.

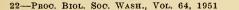
Allosebastes, new subgenus

The most notable character of this subgenus is the reduction of the anal soft-rays to 5—the number characteristic of Scorpaena and of most other tropical genera (Barnhart and Hubbs, Bull. Scripps Inst. Oceanogr. Univ. Calif., vol. 5, 1946, p. 373). As is often true, the value of this character lies in its consistency rather than in the amount of difference. The tropical genera normally with 5 anal soft-rays very seldom deviate from that number and all of the many other species of Sebastodes, with rare individual exceptions, have 6 to 14 anal soft-rays, usually 6, 7, 8, or 9 (Jordan and Evermann, Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 47, pt. 2, 1898, pp. 1765-1835; Matsubara, Trans. Sigenkagaku Kenkyusko, vol. 1, 1943, p. 97).

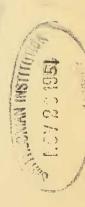
The other fins have a ray formula that is normal for the genus Sebastodes: dorsal, XIII, 12 (rather low but not uniquely so in number of soft-rays); caudal, 7 + 7 (principal rays); pectoral, i, 9, vii = 17 in each fin; pelvic, I, 5. The pertinence of the species to Sebastodes or to a very closely related segregate is confirmed by such characters as the scaly, only moderately spiny and little distorted head, the posteriorly narrowed, unkeeled and unspined suborbital stay, the complete dentition, and the normal fins. The definite though thick and blunt intromittent organ of the male is similar to that of the species of Sebastodes, all of which, so far as known, bear prolarvae.

Other more or less extreme though less trenchantly distinct characters of *S. sinensis* are the smooth, mostly cycloid scales; the unswollen lower pectoral rays; the excessively long anal spines (the second extends well beyond the longest soft-rays, the third almost reaches the tip of the longest soft-ray); the closely clumped subparallel upper 3 preopercular spines (the lower 2 are well separated and divergent); the protuberant posterior end of the mandible, almost resembling a flat spine; and, especially, the very firm, well-exposed suborbital stay (second suborbital), with the bone widened about the unusually large pore, which has a somewhat raised and roughened rim.

¹Contributions from the University of California, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, New Scries, No. 900-576.







The general distinctiveness of this species, as well as its reduced number of anal rays, is correlated with its restriction to the essentially tropical fauna of the Gulf of California, where it alone represents this speciose genus of the North Pacific (Jordan and Evermann, l. c., 1898, pp. 1765-1835; Matsubara, l. c., vol. 2, 1943, pp. 175-252, under Sebastes). Except for one species or species-complex ranging from Perú to South Africa, the entire genus is otherwise confined to the more temperate and to the boreal waters of the North Pacific (Hubbs, Pac. Sci., vol. 4, 1950, p. 70). The disjunction of populations, both in the Southern Hemisphere and in the Gulf of California, presumably dates from some Pleistocene period of oceanic cooling (Hubbs, Jour. Mar. Res., vol. 7, 1948 (1949), p. 463). There were presumably several such periods of cooling and Sebastodes sinensis has probably been separated from its congenors since middle or early Pleistocene time.

It is not wholly clear, however, that Sebastodes (Allosebastes) sinensis represents an offshoot from Sebastodes, with the number of anal rays independently reduced. A thorough revision of the American species, with attention to such anatomical details as Matsubara (l. c., 1943, vols. 1-2) used in his study of the species of the western Pacific, will be required before the phyletic position of S. sinensis can be interperted with confidence. It may represent a group, or stage of evolution, now largely extinct, that is transitional between the temperate and the tropical genera, or vice versa. It may be shown to be so distinct as to warrant full generic separation. In some respects it resembles Helicolenus, from which it differs at least in the unkeeled suborbital stay and in the number of dorsal spines, 13 rather than 12 (a distinction of great significance in this group, because of the consistency of the difference). From each of the few genera with 13 dorsal spines and 5 anal soft-rays, as well as from all other genera except Sebastodes, as these were distinguished by Matsubara, S. sinensis differs in several characters of acknowledged generic import.

Not having examined the species and not having noted its more distinctive features, classifiers of Sebastodes have variously interpreted the relationships of S. sinensis in the large complex of species. Eigenmann and Beeson (Am. Nat., vol. 27, 1893, p. 670) classed it, along with a miscellaneous assortment of other species, in their new genus Pteropodus. Cramer (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., ser. 2, vol. 5, p. 600) associated it in his key with zacentrus, elongatus, levis and rubrivinctus, leaving all in Sebastodes without even subgeneric separation. Jordan and Evermann (Rept. U. S. Comm. Fish and Fish., 1895 (1896), p. 431 and Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 47, pt. 2, 1898, p. 1776), essentially adopting Cramer's arrangement, combined sinensis with the 4 species just named in their new subgenus Hispanicus.

This note is based on a recent examination of the holotype of *Sebasti-chthys sinensis* (U.S.N.M. No. 43085). Only the holotype and 1 paratype have been collected, both at Albatross Station 3015 in the Gulf of California, at a depth of 145 fathoms, at 29° 19′ 00″ N. Lat., 112° 50′ 00″ W. Long.